So This Is Christmas

Temple Bailey

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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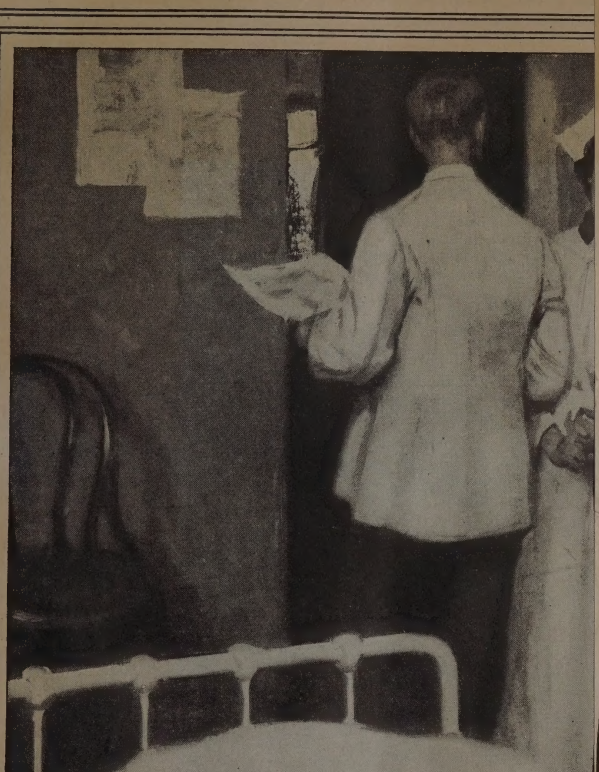
CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER



HERE'S SOME GOS

[*Continued fro*

greased loaf pans in moderate oven (350° F) 1 hour. Sprinkle top with powdered sugar while still hot.

Christmas morning is spent as each person chooses, every one getting his or her own breakfast. Trays have been arranged in the kitchen by one of the family, so it is only necessary to take fruit from the bowl on the table, cereal from the double boiler on the stove, to toast English Muffins on the electric grill and to pour coffee from the percolator. Then the tray is carried to a comfortable place before the open fire in the living-room.

By the time the family and guests have assembled in this leisurely fashion, it is well toward noon, and the gifts are brought out and opened.

Although a real Christmas dinner is ready at four o'clock, no one seems to have spent the whole morning in the kitchen. The duck has been stuffed and almost cooked the day before and now only has to be reheated for an hour. Nora has left the vegetables all ready to cook, and of course, the plum-pudding is made and just has to be heated. Even the sauce for it is ready in the refrigerator. Every one helps by doing little last-minute things, lighting the candles, drawing the curtains, filling the water glasses, arranging the salted nuts, celery, mints and jelly on the table, and putting the chilled grapefruit cocktail at each place.

The duck and vegetables are brought in on the tea-wagon at one trip and while the man of the family carves and serves, some one brings from the refrigerator the salads of crisp hearts of lettuce and stalks of endive with which French Dressing is served. A real Old English Plum Pudding with Hard Sauce completes the menu, and then every one goes into the living-room for coffee.

At the end of the first Christmas Day spent without a maid, this family of

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TEA-WAGON SUPPERS

[*Continued*

Cold Meat
Potato Salad with Green Pepper and

just with coffee.

Whatever is planned, nothing must appear hurried or careless. Batters, syrups, and sauces should be in pitchers; silver and glass all at hand; casseroles or oven-dishes brought in at the last minute.

A tea-wagon supper usually means a "lap" supper. Therefore have large linen napkins, by all means! Nothing is more disagreeable than sticky hands so finger-bowls will be needed when sandwiches, fruit or iced cake are served. A small tray on the lower shelf of the tea-wagon may hold these.

The evening which starts off with a tea-wagon supper is sure to be a success, whatever is to follow, whether cards, dancing, music, radio or conversation.

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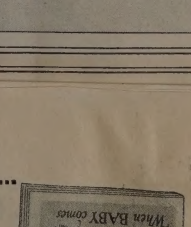

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McCALL'S
CHRISTMAS NUMBER
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"I Want Some Fun Myself. I'm Not A Saint Or A Sister Of Charity. I'm Human"

HV2345
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SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS!

BY TEMPLE BAILEY

ILLUSTRATED BY MEAD SCHAEFFER

"If you will eat your soup, I will tell you a fairy-story," said the red-headed nurse.

"What kind of soup?"

"Chicken."

"Chicken-shadow? Or the real thing?"

"Real. One of the Red Cross women brought it. It has noodles in it." The red-headed nurse fairly sparkled with her knowledge of its deliciousness.

The man sitting on the edge of the bed could not see the sparkle. He was going blind, and the red-headed nurse was simply a blurred shadow against the shine of the lamp beyond.

"I'm not hungry," he said.

"Please. I can't stay if you don't. And I've so much to tell you."

"Tell it anyhow."

"If you'll taste one spoonful."

"Oh, well . . . ."

"It's about myself."

He began to be interested. "What's happened?"

"I have an invitation, if you please.

"Whether we give or whether we share,
The gift without the giver is bare"

So, long ago, Sir Launfal summed up the wisdom of life's richest experience, which is also the supreme wisdom of Christmas-giving and Christmas-receiving. In this beautiful and deeply moving story of a girl who tried to accept Christmas while giving nothing of herself in return—and couldn't—you will find not only one of the most memorable stories ever published in McCall's, but also a Christmas message worthy to carry with you all the year.

And a dress with it. An old school friend of mine has hunted me up and has asked me to a Christmas ball at her house. And her mother is my godmother and has given me the things to wear—the loveliest green gown for the party, with silver lace on it. And silver slippers. I am to stay from the evening before Christmas, which is tonight, until the morning after."

He had been trying to eat the soup, finding his lips carefully with the spoon. Letting the noodles go because one *couldn't*. It was bad enough if one had eyes.

He laid the spoon down. "That means, of course, you'll not be here on Christmas Day."

"I can't be. I'm sorry. But this is such a treat. . . . And you'll hardly know that I'm gone. I am planning everything so that you boys will have your tree and get your presents."

"Presents . . . ." There was weary scorn in his voice. He wanted to say:

What can they give me . . . .? I'm going blind . . . . I'm going blind . . . . I'm going blind . . . . ! But of course he couldn't say it. It wouldn't be sporting. None of the boys whined. He wanted the red-headed nurse to go away. He wanted to pull the bed covers over his head. He wanted to cry like a baby.

Yet he wanted her, too, to stay, so that he might be held back for a moment from that awful blackness which engulfed him when he was alone.

She always talked about pleasant commonplaces in such a pretty way. She had told him a lot about herself. That her mother had died, and that her father had married again, and had failed in business, and she had taken nurse's training so that there might be money enough to go round.

She began now to describe the tree which she had helped to trim. "There's to be one in each ward. I think ours is the nicest. It has an angel on top and silver stars and pale blue lights. It gives it a sort of mystical look. Different."

He knew why she was describing it thus minutely. Lending him her eyes. So that he might tomorrow morning see it with an inner vision.

She went on: "I'm dying to tell you about your present."

Some of the blackness fell from him. "What is it?"

"No . . . . I mustn't spoil it. But I'll tell you about some of the others." She whispered, so that the boys in the surrounding beds would be none the wiser. Her voice was like that of an eager child. And while she talked she fed him his soup. Usually he hated that. It seemed to emphasize his helplessness. But she did it so deftly that he was hardly conscious of eating it, noodles and all, to the very bottom of the bowl.

She had to leave him then. "I'm going to say 'Good-night,' and 'Good-bye' together. I shan't try to wish you 'A Merry Christmas' Pinkney. It can't be that. But I shall wish you a brave one."

"Wishing won't make me brave. I'm a coward. I don't want to have to.... go on. . . ."

Whining! That was it! But he didn't care!

Yet her handclasp heartened him, and when she had gone, he got out some pricked cards that she had given him and began a game of solitaire.

The red-headed nurse passing down the ward found other men in other beds. A cheerful lot if one looked only on the surface. A sporting lot. Most of them knew there wasn't much ahead of them. They all liked the nurse. She was a laughter-loving little thing, and spent herself in service for them. She was pretty, too, and young, but with no nonsense about her. They liked her name which was "Patricia Gayworthy." They felt that it suited her. Some of them called ner "Miss Pat" and some of them called her "Miss Cay," but either way they liked it.

As she went among them tonight, she was aware of a certain lowness of mind in all of them. She tried to think of pleasant things to say, to brighten them up a bit. But it wasn't easy. She knew that what they wanted on Christmas Eve was not platitudes but hearthstones.

Going out, she met the doctor in charge of the ward. His name was Grant, and he had served overseas. He was young, but not as young as the red-headed nurse. He had seen hard service on the other side, and had been a bit fagged by it. He was working too hard, and the only light in his day was the red-headed nurse. He was in love with her. He was not sure that she knew it. He had planned to tell her on Christmas Day.

And now she was saying, "I'm going to be very grand and gorgeous. I'm going away tonight. To a house party. I shan't be back until day after tomorrow."

"Oh, but look here, you can't."

"Why not?"

"Because we can't spare you."

"Who is 'we'?"

"Everybody. What kind of Christmas will the boys have without you?"

"I'm not so important. And anyhow I want some fun myself. I'm not a saint or a Sister of Charity. I'm human. I've got to see some happy people. Here there's just Pinkney's eyes," there were tears in her own . . "and Bruelle . . . . dying . . . ."

"I know." Then after a silence, "when do you leave?"

"I am going over now to the nurses' quarters to change. My bags are packed. My hostess is sending her chauffeur for me! They dine at eight, and after that there's the dance and a tree."

"And you won't be back tomorrow?"

"Not till the day after."

"H'm . . . . Well, I call it rather shabby of you."

"Don't you want me to be happy?"

"Of course. But I want to be happy, too."

She had a wisp of a smile for his paraphrase of the popular song. "You'd better run away."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"The other fellows want to eat Christmas dinner with their families. I'm the only bachelor in the bunch."

They were walking now towards the nurses' quarters. "You ought to have a house of your own," she told him with fine unconsciousness.

"I want it," he said, "with you in it."

She gasped, "But how could I?"

"I am asking you to marry me. I intended to do it tomorrow. But you are going away."

Recovering from the first shock, she said: "Of course I couldn't."

"Why not?"

"Because I like you a lot. But not that way."

"What way . . . ?"

The wind blowing a great blast, almost swept her from her feet. He anchored her with a firm grip on her arm. "What way?" he asked again.

She considered it for a moment as he stood with his body shielding her. The lights of the hospital twinkled in rows to the right of them, the lights of the nurses' quarters twinkled in rows to the left of them. Between was a stretch of snowy ground, overhead was a fleecy sky, with the moon racing.

"Well, I'm not in love with you . ." was her final explanation.

"How do you know?"

"If I loved you I'd want to marry you. And I don't."

His grip on her arm hurt her. "Do you think I am going to let it go at that? Why don't you want to marry me?"

"Because I am a mercenary little beast. Once upon a time my father had money. And I liked it. And I'd like to have it again. I want a husband who can give me things. I want a husband like my friend has where I am going to the party. I want a town house and a country house, and motor cars and a yacht. And lovely clothes. And fur coats. And I shouldn't be happy without them."

She thought she was saying dreadful things. Things that would make him fall out of love with her. But instead, he laughed. "You don't know your own mind and heart. You were happier tonight feeding Pinkney his soup than you'd be with a thousand motor cars."

"Oh, did you see us?"

"Yes. They all adore you. They'll have a rotten Christmas without you."

"You men are all alike. Trying to make me stay. Pinkney did. But I'm not going to think about you. I'm going to think about myself."

She began to walk on outwardly unconcerned, but inwardly acutely aware of his nearness, as he still shielded her from the wind. "You mustn't think I don't appreciate you," she said, after they had gone a little way in silence, "and the wonderfulness of your caring for me. You are fine and good, and such a darling with the boys. It's just that I'm such a selfish little beast."

"You're not that. And this isn't the end of things. It's the beginning." He caught up her hands and kissed them. They had reached the nurses' quarters, and he stood, still holding her hands, while she gave him some last instructions about the boys.

"I bought a music box for Pinkney. A fine little Swiss one—and it plays such gay little tunes. I wanted something for his ears—everything else seemed to be for eyes."

"The specialist who examined Pinkney is to telephone tonight what he thinks."

"You mean that there may be—hope?"

"I'm afraid not—"

"Oh—he's so patient. Poor fellow."

She tried to withdraw her hands, and he kissed them. Then he let her go. She ran up the steps, and called down from the top, "A Merry Christmas!"

He lifted his cap and the light shone on the gray of his hair. She had a little lump in her throat. He was like Pinkney. He needed her. Some of the gray had come from those dreadful days overseas.

But then . . . . she couldn't always be thinking about other people. And she wasn't going to marry just because a man's gray hair hurt her to think about. She was going to put on the green dress and the silver slippers and dance until daylight!

"PINKNEY . . ." SHE COULDN'T GO ON. AND SUDDENLY SHE BEGAN TO SOB. "PINKNEY, YOU'RE GOING TO SEE. THE DOCTOR SAYS SO. NEXT CHRISTMAS YOU ARE GOING TO SEE THE MORNING SKY"

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS
DRAWING BY O. F. HOWARD

IT was seven o'clock when Patricia reached her destination. The house was huge, and high iron gates were swung wide for the motor cars to sweep through, and there was a butler at the front door, and a footman on the stairs, and a maid in your room to help you dress.

But before the maid could lift a finger, the red-headed nurse had to be embraced by her friend Barbara, who was called Babs for short, and who had been at school Patricia's best beloved. And Babs was more beautiful than ever, and had a baby.

"To *think*," she emphasized, "that you've never seen him, and he's five years old. And you've never seen my husband. We were so long abroad. Nick is mad about it."

"Are you?"

"I'm not sure. Things are different over there. More sophisticated."

Babs was different. Lighted with a new brilliance. Patricia was not sure she liked it. The old Babs had been so utterly herself. This new Babs seemed to shine with a hardness like diamonds. "She used to be—wax candles," Patricia remembered.

They went to the nursery, and there was Babs' baby asleep in a quaint mahogany bed, with carved angels at the four corners. At the foot of the bed hung a stocking, tied up with red ribbon and a bit of holly. A middle-aged woman, spick and span in white linen, was reading a book by a shaded lamp. She rose as they entered.

"I see that you've hung up his stocking, Nonny," Babs said.

"He hung it up himself, dear lamb, like the one in his story book."

Patricia wondered why Babs had not been there to help him hang the stocking. She felt that if the child had been her own, she would have begrudged every moment of mirth that she did not share.

"He's such a handsome laddie," his mother was saying. "Good-looking like Nick. Only Nick's hair is dark."

Patricia said, "How wonderful to have a son."

"Oh, well, of course. But sometimes it isn't wonderful. Not when Nick wants me to do things, and there's Toodles to think of. Nick doesn't like it to have me tied."

Patricia reflected that Nick, too, might like to be tied to a son like Toodles. But she didn't ask questions. And Babs said, "Pat, darling, we must run and dress—people will be coming before we know it."

Well, the maid to whom Babs entrusted her friend, massaged her and curled her and powdered her, and touched up her brows and lashes, and deepened the roses of her cheeks, and when at last the green dress was slipped over her head, and her feet were shod in the silver slippers, Patricia looked in the glass, and knew she was a raving beauty!

When she went downstairs, all the men crowded about her and at last Babs brought her husband, who had missed a train from New York and hardly had time to get into his dinner clothes.

And Babs' husband said to Babs' friend: "With that red hair of yours you ought to conquer the world. All the famous beauties had red hair. Think about it, and tell me when I dance with you, if it isn't true."

He said it in a sort of exciting way, as if what you would tell him when you danced with him would mean a great deal, and he would be up on his toes to know. He was handsome and distinguished, and it seemed wonderful that Babs should have such a husband—little Babs who had been at school with her—as it had seemed wonderful that she should have a baby.

At dinner, the two young men who sat on each side of Patricia were great fun. They flattered her a lot, and asked for a lot of dances, and drank a lot of champagne, and tried to get Patricia to drink it, but she told them, "Why should I? And you'd be better off without it."

They laughed at that, and one of them said: "You mustn't have such an unholy conscience. And where did you learn to listen with your eyes?"

She had learned it at the hospital, when the boys talked to her, and she had had to seem attentive or hurt their feelings. But she didn't tell this to the two young men. She wondered if they knew she was a nurse? And would it make a difference if they did?

After dinner she had a grand and glorious time. She danced and danced and danced. There didn't seem to be any end to it, and she didn't want it to end. The music was marvellous, the floor perfect, the ballroom decorations heavenly. She didn't have adjectives enough to describe it all.

Towards midnight the fun grew wild and wilder, and at last the two young men who had sat beside her at dinner, and whom everybody called "Trux" and "Benny" came up and said:

"Let's duck this . . . ."

"And get another girl and look at the stars . . . ."

They said it just that way, together. And Patricia surveyed them with the cool glance she reserved for derelicts at the hospital: "You're drunk," she said, "and what you need is bed and bromo-seltzer."

They roared at that, and said she was "ripping," and that they were going to carry her off. And the one whose name was Trux said: "You've never seen as many stars as I shall show you."

And the other, whose name was Benny, said: "Don't you believe him. He knows only one star, and that is Venus!"

Well, Babs' husband reseued her, and sent the roaring young men away. He had a dance with Patricia, he told them; which wasn't true, because she really had it with Trux. But Trux couldn't think of anything but the stars. "If you've never seen them from a Rolls-Royce," he said, "you've missed something."

"I've seen them from a Ford," was Patricia's parting shot, "and taking it all in all, perhaps it's safer."

Babs' husband danced delightfully. It was the third dance Patricia had had with him, and each time he had talked about red hair, and the wonderful women in history who had had it: "Helen and Cleopatra and the rest."

And Pat had asked him: "Were they all red-headed?"

And he had answered: "Well, at least they all had red-headed temperaments."

And now with the third dance, he was again at it. "You have temperament," he said. "Babs hasn't. Queer thing. How different you are."

Somehow the way he put it made it seem uncomplimentary to Babs. To Babs who had been the queen bee of the hive at school. To Babs who had out-distanced all of the others in her list of lovely perfections.

Patricia tried to say something of this: "Babs was our fairy princess in the old days."

"Fairy princesses are not always—human."

Again that subtle note of disparagement. Patricia ignored it. "It seems wonderful to think that Babs is really married."

"Wonderful? Don't all pretty women marry?"

"Perhaps. But still—it's wonderful."

He looked down at her, laughing. "Why aren't you married if you think that way about it?"

"I've got to wait."

"For what?"

"Love."

"You won't have to wait long if men have their way."

"It must not be their way. But mine."

"I see. But why be so serious about it?"

"Because it's a life matter."

"Not at all. You've got the wrong slant on it. Babs and I look at it more sensibly. Neither of us thinks of marriage as a sacrament. If we should be lucky enough to go on loving each other, we'll stick it. If not, we'll be off with it. We both believe that if a man or a woman feels tied by matrimony, then it should end automatically."

Patricia flamed: "That's a horrid philosophy, I think."

"Why?"

"Oh, what would love be worth if it were so—unstable?"

He laughed again. "You are like Babs when I first met her. Old-fashioned."

Old-fashioned! Her beautiful dreaming Babs!

"I could teach you," he went on, his laughing eyes noting the flames in her own, "a glorious freedom—"

Babs came up at that moment, providentially, to ask her husband about the tree. Would he see that everything was ready? The clocks were striking twelve. While she talked she hung on his arm. It was easy to see that she adored him. And he didn't believe in constancy! He didn't believe in dreams of youth, or in aspirations, or hopes! He didn't believe in anything!

It was a most amazing tree. It hadn't anything to do with Christ and the Star. It hadn't even anything to do with Santa Claus and little children. It was strange and fantastic like something out of the Arabian Nights. It was a great round ball of clipped yew, and hung on it were dozens and dozens of golden oranges, and each orange was a box, and in each box was a tiny gift. Coming from the top of the tree, which was crowned by a gold cupid, were floating streamers of silk, and at the end of the streamers were gold and silver balloons which floated like bubbles in the air, and the guests were given golden bows and arrows, and shot at the balloons, and for every balloon that was shot, one got a golden orange.

Patricia shot three balloons and got three oranges, and in one of them was a wee vanity box, and in another a wee gold pencil, and in the third, a wee vial of rose perfume.

The perfume made her think of Pinkney. She had often brought him a rose, because of the fragrance. And he had said to her, "You should have seen the roses in my mother's garden . . . ."

With thoughts of Pinkney came a vision of the long room at the hospital as it would be tonight—the cold moonlight in pools on the polished floor, some of the boys asleep, others awake in their narrow beds. [*Turn to page 73*]

AFTER DINNER SHE HAD A GRAND AND GLORIOUS TIME

ARE WE OUTGROWING CHRISTMAS?

BY LOUISE NICOLL WEBSTER

ILLUSTRATED BY O. F. HOWARD

IS THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE SOPHISTICATION OF A FLAPPER GENERATION?

TURKEY .... mashed potatoes .... boiled onions. ONIONS!" The voice rose in a crescendo of horror. "Mother, don't you know Queen Victoria's *dead?* Bury her."

It was a week before Christmas, and I was in the act of discussing with Marianne the menu for our Christmas dinner. Marianne is my daughter. Her age is twenty. Her hair is bobbed—no, shingled, I believe, is the correct term for the tailored tonsure which allows one to admire her two charming, shell-pink ears. Her skirts do not venture more than three daring inches below her knees. I have seen her use a lipstick and I know she smokes cigarettes. Needless to say, I love her. But there are times when I do so to a degree of desperation.

This was one of those times.

When I was a small child my mother, knowing full well that among my liabilities was a quick temper, taught me in moments of stress to count ten before I spoke. It was a good rule, but middle age and considerable experience as the mother of Marianne, young Henry and the twins have given me a method of my own which is quite as efficacious. Following this self-ordained ritual, I removed my glasses, looked at them critically for a moment, breathed first on one lens then on the other; polished them on a corner of my handkerchief, and placed them astride my nose. Then, and not until then, I spoke.

"What menu would you suggest?" I asked.

I flatter myself that my tone was calm.

"If you ask me," Marianne returned blithely, "I'd say, something snappy. No more of those old time, ceremonial, family feeds. Something like a cross between a meal at a darn good country club and the Ritz."

A country club! . . . The Ritz! . . .

"But this is Christmas," I wanted to remonstrate. Christmas, Marianne. Don't you understand? Ah .... and don't you remember? And what has Christmas to do with country clubs, even "darn good" ones, or the Ritz? Or, for that matter, with any of the snappy, zippy, up-to-the-minute ideals that govern us, whether we are conscious of it or not, all the other days in the year? Why, the very essence of Christmas is that it is none of these. It is our great annual day off from the aching necessity of being modern."

Meanwhile, Marianne was elaborating: "A fruit cocktail first, or oysters, or Little Necks; then some kind of entrée, and after that duckling or guinea hen or squabs . . . one to each person, so there'll be no carving . . . And two green vegetables. No potatoes, they're so stodgy, or . . . or ONIONS. Peas might be nice . . . ."

Privately I thought they might—at fifty cents a pound.

Marianne continued: "After that a fancy salad. I'll make that if Katy's not up to it, and I guess she isn't. For dessert something light and simple—meringues, or an ice . . . . and coffee of course."

As she talked I had jotted down the proposed menu on the paper before me where it stood over and against the list of those dear ones for whose enjoyment our Christmas feast was to be spread. The list was longer than usual this year. It included: Theodore (Marianne's newly acquired fiancé); Theodore's mother and his sister, both of whom we were to meet on that day for the first time; Marianne, of course; Cousin Ella who lives in Schenectady and who has spent every Christmas with us since the year she and I sat up till two A. M. on Christmas morning making clothes to come on and off of Marianne's Christmas doll; Henry's partner whose wife and daughter were in Europe, and who preferred to spend the holiday with us, whom he knew intimately, rather than with one of his sisters-in-law; Henry Junior, home from college, and his roommate, brought at the last minute because he had no home of his own to go to, his parents being divorced; the twins, aged fourteen; Henry and I.

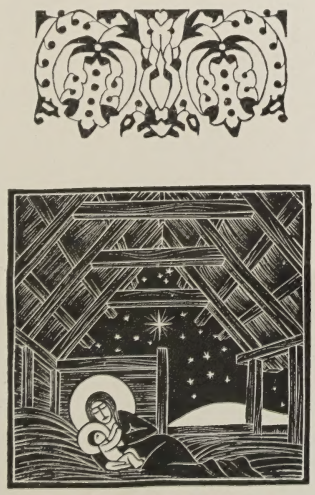
As my eyes travelled from one name to the next there arose between me and the paper a vision of our Christmas dinner as I had pictured it to myself. . . . . The walnut table stretched to its full capacity, filling our dining-room. The mound of holly in the center spreading festively over the white damask cloth. Cranberry sauce and currant jelly—with a special mound of grape for Henry who prefers this condiment to any other—nuts, raisins, candied fruits and peppermints in pretty glass dishes down the board. The double row of faces stretching from Henry to me—dear, beloved faces, glowing with memories of just such happy Christmases past and with the promise of many more to come. The turkey—weighing all of sixteen pounds—being borne in by Katy with the air of a feudal retainer bringing in the boar's head, and carved by Henry who has a nice appreciation for each person's taste in light and dark meat, stuffing and gravy. The twins and the wishbone. That picture carried a stab. Perhaps, even as soon as next Christmas, they will be too grown up for such childish amusements as wishing. The jokes . . . well worn family jokes, not too funny, as home made witticisms never are except to their originators. The stories.... and so on while the pale winter sunlight faded, and evening drew in . . . . and it was time to gather about the piano and sing . . . .

But Marianne was speaking: "There's another thing, Mother. Let's not have dinner in the middle of the day. It's so *Victorian!* Let's just have a light lunch, and dinner about seven. And tell Katy to speed everything up so it will be out of the way before the dance breaks at the Club."

She dropped a light kiss on top of my head and was gone on one of the innumerable errands that take our young people away from us. Her heels tapped a gay little fanfare on the stairs. I remained—to wonder.

Are we, I asked myself, in danger of outgrowing Christmas? Is the Christmas spirit unable to withstand the sophistication of a flapper generation? Will there be a day—and not so far distant—when it may be necessary to organize a Save Christmas Movement with committees and badges and pledge cards? None of these possibilities are pleasant to contemplate, especially if you belong quite frankly, as I do, to the older generation— the generation that remembers what Christmas was like before the telephone could break in on the family circle with an urgent summons to "Come on over to the Club and dance;" before country clubs were, or victrolas, or automobiles, or electricity, or the radio. When we had our turkey from the farm and our music from the old square piano and mother's fingers; when there were tiny red candles on our Christmas tree and a bucket of water close by in case of accidents; when our Christmas stockings began with an orange and a candy cane and ended with a barley sugar camel and a shiny new ten cent piece. In fact, before every one had so much money and worldly wisdom but more time in which to be happy.

It is generally conceded that the home is finding it difficult to compete with those "darn good . [*Turn to page 80*]



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS
WOODCUT BY ERIC GILL

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WHEN you are doing laundry work with a clothes washing machine you must depend upon the soap and water doing its full work, aided of course by the mechanical principle of the machine itself. The dirt must be *washed* out of the clothing instead of *rubbed* out.

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Seven different well known soaps were used, and ten different assortments of clothes. In every instance regardless of the kind of soap used, they demonstrated that the soap and water worked more effectively and the laundry came out decidedly better when Twenty Mule Team Borax was used in the water. Much more plentiful and more lasting suds, linens white, colored clothes spotless, curtains beautifully clean. These are facts which no woman doing the home wash, whether by machine or by hand, can disregard. Because by following these same methods you can get better results in your laundry work. Let us send to you a pamphlet describing the details of this test and the methods used. Use the coupon below.

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• • • •

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Twenty mule team
BORAX

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THE GREATEST STORY IN THE WORLD TODAY

[*Continued from page 16*]

wheat. Mussolini's decision that any estate left uncultivated would be taxed to the full amount it ought to yield, has brought results—that and the fact that incomes have been so reduced since the war and the cost of living so advanced that the formerly idle gentry are obliged to work to meet expenses. But this safety has made another essential thing possible—roads and water. The roads have been, and still are in many parts of the South, execrable; but everywhere you bump your way you find roads, reservoirs, aqueducts building.

Take the great marshes south of Naples—for hundreds of years they have been little better than waste places. Men and women died of malaria there, and brigands made life unsafe for the would-be restorers of the great abandoned estates. The draining of these marshes has long been a project and a promise of the Italian Government. Well, not only does the little railroad into the marshes now run on time; but the draining of tens of thousands of acres are complete, and crops of a great variety are growing where recently only the water buffalo wallowed.

Best of all perhaps, and a good index to the new methods, Mussolini's reorganization of the relations of labor and capital has inspired the beginning of decent houses for the workers on the marshes. You see them going up in all directions—tidy, white, green-shuttered, the first decent living places which many of the tenants ever entered. They tell you that it is American money that is doing it. Men and women whom the war brought to Italy took their American savings, bought a piece of rocky cliff, blasted out a narrow ledge—they are still at it—carted soil, planted vines and trees, built a house, "two stories and a porch as in America"—and are giving nights and days to the culture of their vineyards and groves.

These buildings are a curious contrast to the square one story Saracen houses with their black and white domed roofs, and not alone in form. Their tidiness brings out the complete indifference to order and cleanliness which so characterizes the Saracen community. And it has its effect. There is much rebuilding, remodelling going on—voluntary efforts to do as they do in America! One of the most interesting and touching community undertakings I have ever come across has felt the touch of this influence. It is a tiny fishing village in a cleft of the mountain on the Campanian coast. Here live apart from their fellows 50 or so people, happy, busy in a world of their own. Two years ago a great flood swept down the cleft, usually dry, and washed away their houses and what they felt more deeply, their church. Poor as they must be, like all Italians they had [*Turn to page 82*]

SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS!

[*Continued from page 7*]

There would be pain there, and heartache, and fear of what was ahead. Yet there would be, too, fortitude.

And in the morning, waking to dreariness and a yearning for home, they would try to carry on . . . . . .

And she would not be there to help!

With that vision upon her, she was blind at the moment to everything about her. Gone was the great ballroom crowded with dancers—the gowns of the women lighting it with superb color, rose and jade and sapphire; the tree flaunting golden streamers, the music booming, shining, moaning—drums, saxophones, syncopation. For Patricia there was only that long room with its cold moonlight, and the need it had of her.

She tried to tell herself that it was silly to let her mind dwell on it. That to Pinkney and Bruelle and all the rest of them her coming and going was not important. That she might as well stay and have her good time, and return home refreshed and rested. Then suddenly she knew she wasn't having a good time. She was missing something that should have been there. All about her people were shouting: "A Merry Christmas." But it didn't seem to her that any of them were merry. Their voices grew louder, the fun grew fast and furious; but of real mirth, of simple satisfying happiness, she could see no sign.

The climax came when, the guests having tired of the bows and arrows, the beat of a tom-tom was heard above the clamor of voices, and through the great archway which spanned the entrance to the ballroom streamed a wild procession. Jesters were there, and black slaves bearing gifts, and pages holding steaming bowls aloft, and houris dancing, and mounted on a barrel, the Spirit of Christmas, as fat as Falstaff, and carrying a ladle.

Well, there is this to be said for Patricia, she was neither a prig nor a prude. She knew there was no harm in having fun on Christmas Eve if one wanted it. But as for herself, she didn't want it if she had to have it with those two young men who had had more than enough champagne, or with Babs' husband who wanted to teach her a glorious freedom, or with all those flushed women who seemed to have forgotten that because of a great Mother, this night of all others should have been spent in their homes.

She fled to the top of the stairs and stood looking down. The black men who had brought the gifts, had laid them before the Falstaffian saint, who still mounted on his barrel, beat time with his ladle to the tom-toms. And the black men began to weave back and forth in a fantastic dance, and the houris waved their veils and jingled their bracelets, and coiled themselves like glittering snakes.

As the beat of the tom-toms grew faster, they began to sound an accompaniment to the words that echoed in Patricia's brain: "So this is Christmas . . . *so this is Christmas* . . . SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS!" said the tom-toms. But nobody heard but the girl on the stairs!

The young man called Trux looked up and saw her. He waved to her, made his way through the crowd, and began climbing the stairs. When he stumbled on the first landing, Patricia took to her heels, rushed up the remaining steps, ran down the dim hall, found her door, slammed it behind her, locked it, and leaned against it breathless.

She told herself afterwards, scornfully, that her nerves were on edge. She had never been afraid at the hospital. Not even when the big blond Swede in the nervous ward had tried to brain her with a chair. She had quieted him without help, and had only been a little shaky afterwards. But tonight there was something—she couldn't quite define it—something sinister in the air. Something malevolent. Something corrupting. She had expected it would be different—fine and exquisite, a part of the old Babs, and of the dreams they had shared together. There had been nothing fine about it. She wondered if it was because against Babs' sincerity had been set the sophistication of her husband. He was, perhaps, the stronger, and Babs, loving him, had been submerged.

How dreadful to be submerged like that in another's personality! Yet if Babs' husband had been like—oh, why not say it?—like—Doctor Jimmie Grant, she would not have been submerged, she would have been carried along by a strength which would never fail her, she would have been borne up by a faith which would never falter, she would have had dreams to match her own.

Patricia had never called the doctor-in-charge by his first name, but now in her thoughts she spoke of him as "Jimmie." She was glad that it wasn't any more pretentious than that, just simple and boyish, belonging to him. His whole name, James Jasper Grant, had a steady ring to it, like his steady voice when he spoke to Pinkney or to poor Bruelle. She wondered what he was doing. Asleep, perhaps. Or perhaps called out of bed by poor Bruelle. She knew the comfort he would be to that passing soul. He was more than a doctor. He was a priest.

Since she was no longer frightened, she opened her door and went into the hall. At one end of it was a great window which looked over the hills, and reached from the ceiling to the floor. Patricia walked towards it, and stood gazing out at the stars. The night was still, and the snow lay white over the garden. Patricia thought of the hospital and the lights shining. She thought of Jimmie Grant shielding her from the wind.

She was startled by hearing a little voice at her side: "I want my Nonny."

It was Babs' baby. Adorable in pink pajamas, with sleep still in his eyes, his mop of curls standing up like a crown.

She bent down to him, "Nonny will be here presently. Will I do, until she comes? I'm a Nonny, too, you know."

"Do you take care of little boys?"

"I take care of big men. Sick ones."

He cocked his head, "Would you rather take care of little boys?"

"I would tonight. Shall we run back to bed? And I'll sit with you till your Nonny comes."

His hand was tucked in hers confidingly. "Will you tell me a story?"

"Yes. If you'll shut your eyes."

When they reached his room, the stocking still hung limp from its red ribbon.

"Santa Claus didn't come yet," Toodles confided as he climbed into bed.

"He'll come after you go to sleep."

When his head was on the pillow, and the covers up to his chin, he said, "Tell me a story."

"What about?"

"Oh—Donner and Blitzen . . ."

"I know a better one."

"What about?"

"Jesus in the manger."

"Who was Jesus-in-the-manger?"

Was this Babs' child? It seemed to Patricia incredible! Babs who had always said her prayers at school. Whose faith had seemed so steadfast.

With Toodles' hand in hers, she told him the lovely story. He listened entranced. "If Mary came here," he said, all shining with the thought of it, "and there wasn't any room, I'd sleep on the floor and give the little baby my bed. I'd let the darling little baby sleep in my bed." Babs' child? Or his father's?

When Toodles slept finally, Patricia still sat beside him. The nurse coming in, asked, "Oh, did he wake?"

"Yes. And he was sweet. Nurse, he said if Mary had come here, and there had been no place to lay the Baby, he would have given up his bed."

"Oh, if they knew you had talked such things to him they wouldn't like it. They won't let me. His father doesn't want him to be narrow-minded. It almost breaks my heart."

"I didn't know. I'm glad I didn't. His mother wasn't like that . . !"

The red-headed nurse went back to her room, and to bed. It was a beautiful bed and it had four pillows. She curled up and fell fast asleep. And the droning of the saxophone intruded on her dreams.

She was waked by some one coming into her room and speaking her name, "Pats, darling."

Patricia sat up. "I've been asleep," she said, superfluously.

"What on earth made you come up to bed?" Babs demanded. [*Turn to page 76*]

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A gain of 500,000 *homes within two years*

HALF a million new families who tested Postum—compared its delicious flavor, its effect on health, its convenience, its economy—and made the wise decision.

Many members of these families have sent letters describing their experiences. The letters were written in confidence, so are not published. But we wish you could read them! Then you would realize that the Postum advertising does not exaggerate. We have thousands of letters which are stronger testimonies for Postum than any advertisement.

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Make the thirty-day test of Postum, *then* decide! Judge what the change has done for your general physical condition within the short period of thirty days. Learn how satisfying, how enjoyable this drink is—a steaming hot beverage with a *different* flavor. To hundreds of thousands of others this thirty-day test has been a revelation.

Carrie Blanchard, famous food demonstrator, will help you start the test. Accept her generous offer.

Carrie Blanchard's Offer

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"Or if you would rather start the test today, get Postum at your grocer's. It costs much less than most other hot drinks—one-half cent a cup.

"For one week's free supply, please indicate on the coupon whether you would prefer Instant Postum, made instantly in the cup, or Postum Cereal, the kind you boil."

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Postum is one of the Postum Cereal Company products, which include also Grape-Nuts, Post Toasties (Double-thick Corn Flakes), Post's Bran Flakes, Post's Bran Chocolate, Jell-O and Swans Down Cake Flour. Your grocer sells Postum in two forms. Instant Postum, made in the cup by adding boiling water, is one of the easiest drinks in the world to prepare. Postum Cereal is also easy to make, but should be boiled 20 minutes.

P.—Mc.—12-26

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LET the children get up as early as they like on Christmas morning—if there's a Perfection Heater among the presents. It starts its career of service and radiates warmth to every corner of the room—even before the gift card is untied! Carry it anywhere there is a chilly spot. It provides generous warmth at low cost. Ask any dealer to show you the new models.

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In Canada, the Perfection Stove Co. Ltd., Sarnia, Ontario

Chases Chills from Cold Corners

PERFECTION
Oil Heaters

SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS!

[*Continued from page 73*]

"I thought you'd gone out to look at the stars with Benny and Trux. But when they romped in they had two other girls with them. Nick said he saw you running upstairs, and sent me to find you." She sat down. "What on earth made you go to bed?"

Patricia, with her red hair in a sunrise effect about her face said, "I was sleepy."

"Weren't you having a good time?"

"Too swift for me, dearest. I haven't travelled as fast as you in the years since we saw each other."

Babs had a quick little sigh for that, then said, "But you ought to come down. We are having breakfast."

"Breakfast? What time is it?"

"Almost five."

"*A. M.?*"

"Yes."

"What time do you expect to get up tomorrow?"

"In the afternoon. Trux and Benny are coming then to take us to a tea dance. They want you to go."

"But what about Toodles?"

"Toodles?"

"Yes. Won't we have any Christmas day with you? Or Christmas dinner?"

"He will show me his stocking, and spend the day with Nonny. He'll be perfectly happy."

"Babs, don't you ever think how we loved Christmas morning, and our fathers and mothers being with us, and going to church, and all the children at dinner?"

"Nick says family gatherings are bromidic. He doesn't believe in such things."

"Don't you?"

"I'm not sure. And it's frightfully old-fashioned." Her voice took on a hard edge. "I'm not going to worry myself about it. I adore Nick." Trouble ahead for Babs! Patricia could hear Nick's voice saying, "If we love each other enough we'll stick it." If he did not love Babs enough, would he break her heart?

She reached out and caught Babs' hand in hers. "My dear, my dear," she said, "it isn't old-fashioned to have—faith!"

A voice in the hall. Nick's. "Babs, where are you?" Babs stood up. "Be a good sport, Patsy. You never used to be—stuffy. Come on down and be one of us."

The red-headed nurse, getting into her clothes, asked herself if being stuffy meant to want the best for Babs and her baby? Wishing happiness for them? Content?

She did not put on her party gown. She put on the dress she had worn when she came from the hospital. She looked up Nonny, and left a note with her. The note said: "*Babs, darling, I've got to go back. There's a blind boy at the hospital, and one who can't get well. And I think I ought to look after them. And you mustn't think I am stuffy, dearest. I am just the same Patsy who shared your room with you . . . . And darling, if you ever need me, I'll come to the end of the earth.*"

DOCTOR Jimmie Grant simply could not believe it. To have her in his arms. To hear her saying: "It was like waddling around with a lot of geese, after having flown with an eagle."

"Didn't you like it?"

"Like it? I loathed it. And I felt that I couldn't stay another minute. I went out to the garage and found a chauffeur who was glad enough to drive me over. And I couldn't get here quick enough. I kept thinking of what I wanted to tell you. I thought I might have to save it until later in the day—so we could be alone. And then the luck of it . . . to find you up and here."

"Here" was on the way to the hospital from the nurses' quarters. Patricia had gotten into white linen gown and cap and blue cape, and had started across the snowy way, and suddenly, there he was coming towards her, his head down and not seeing her! And she had come up to him in the Christmas dawn, and had clutched at his coat, and had said, continuing the conversation where it had ended the night before; "Jimmie, I don't want a rich husband. I want you."

He didn't ask her any questions, he simply lifted her in his arms and said, "Thank God!" Time enough for questions when this supreme moment had passed. Time enough for everything . . . she was his forever . . .

It was bitterly cold, but they did not know it. Yet when they came into the hospital, he made her sit in his office, while she thawed out and he gave her an account of things that had happened.

"There's Pinkney's eyes," he said at last, "I saved that for you to tell him."

"He's going to get better?" But she knew from his voice.

"He's going to see."

She had risen in her chair and was looking at him, wide-eyed, vivid, wonderful, "Oh, Jimmie, Jimmie," she said, "to think that I thought I'd be happier eating scrambled eggs with all those idiots, than to be telling Pinkney . . . ." Her voice failed her. "I'm going to cry," she said, "do you think it would be against discipline, if you would shut the door, and let me do it on your shoulder?"

THE men in the ward felt there wasn't much to wake up for. Bruelle, restless with pain, had seen an hour ago the bright lights of a motor. He spoke now in a hushed voice to Pinkney: "Some one came in early."

"How do you know?"

"A car passed. A big one."

"What time is it?"

"Seven."

The night was over. But to Pinkney it would always be night. He sighed and covered up his head. Christmas morning? What did he care for Christmas!

Then suddenly there came to his ears a gay little tune! The tinkling one from the Magic Flute! A music box!

He sat up, his ears strained to listen.

A murmur ran around the room, growing louder: "It's Miss Pat. She's back."

Pinkney simply couldn't believe it. Not even when she called out: "A Merry Christmas, everybody," and shook hands all round, holding Pinkney's a little longer while she said: "I've got a present for you. Can you find your way to the sun-room in fifteen minutes?"

It was easy enough to find his way, and at this time the room would be empty. He wondered what Miss Pat would give him for a present.

There was no sun at this hour, but he found the room warm.He sat in the big chair, listening for her step.

Patricia, coming in, said with seeming tactlessness: "Pinkney, I wish you could see the lovely sky."

His tone was dull. "I shall never see it."

"Pinkney, let me tell you about it." He knew from her voice that she was standing now by the wide window which faced the east, "All above the horizon is a strip of silver, and above that a strip of rose, and above that . . . . above that . . . . deep purple, with a star . . . ! Pinkney, it's Christmas morning!"

Something moving now in her voice, something breathless . . . . "*Pinkney . . .*"

She couldn't go on, and suddenly she began to sob. "Pinkney, you're going to *see*. The doctor says so. Next Christmas you are going to see the morning sky!"

His hand groped for her shoulder. Gripped it. He did not speak, but it was worth everything to catch his radiant, lifted look; worth all the glitter and gleam of golden oranges and bows and arrows, and green gowns and silver slippers. It was worth all the hard work that she had ever had, and all the hard work that was yet to come—to see the radiance of his countenance as he turned his eyes up towards the coming Light.

HERE'S SOME CHRISTMAS GOSSIP!

[*Continued from page 32*]

greased loaf pans in moderate oven (350° F) 1 hour. Sprinkle top with powdered sugar while still hot.

Christmas morning is spent as each person chooses, every one getting his or her own breakfast. Trays have been arranged in the kitchen by one of the family, so it is only necessary to take fruit from the bowl on the table, cereal from the double boiler on the stove, to toast English Muffins on the electric grill and to pour coffee from the percolator. Then the tray is carried to a comfortable place before the open fire in the living-room.

By the time the family and guests have assembled in this leisurely fashion, it is well toward noon, and the gifts are brought out and opened.

Although a real Christmas dinner is ready at four o'clock, no one seems to have spent the whole morning in the kitchen. The duck has been stuffed and almost cooked the day before and now only has to be reheated for an hour. Nora has left the vegetables all ready to cook, and of course, the plum-pudding is made and just has to be heated. Even the sauce for it is ready in the refrigerator. Every one helps by doing little last-minute things, lighting the candles, drawing the curtains, filling the water glasses, arranging the salted nuts, celery, mints and jelly on the table, and putting the chilled grapefruit cocktail at each place.

The duck and vegetables are brought in on the tea-wagon at one trip and while the man of the family carves and serves, some one brings from the refrigerator the salads of crisp hearts of lettuce and stalks of endive with which French Dressing is served. A real Old English Plum Pudding with Hard Sauce completes the menu, and then every one goes into the living-room for coffee.

At the end of the first Christmas Day spent without a maid, this family of grown-ups voted it their happiest.

THE CHRISTMAS HOUSE-PARTY

A house-party is almost sure to be a success at Christmas, and if you have young people in the family nothing will make them so happy as being allowed to invite some friends to spend the Holidays with them. Mrs. McP's two children always have two or three house guests, and they plan their own amusements, for the most part. Mrs. McP's chief responsibility lies in providing enough food to keep up with the pace. For instance, they are ravenously hungry when they come home from coasting or skating; they want "just a bite to eat," after an evening of dancing; and they "toss off" three big meals a day as easily as a grown-up consumes a cup of weak tea. All of which keeps my friend rather busy but she manages to get a great deal of pleasure out of it herself.

If you decide to have a house-party do as much of your preparation in advance as you can. Boil a ham and a tongue; roast chickens or a turkey; cook a meat loaf; bake a big jar of beans, Boston style; make up jellied salads and jellied desserts, all of which will keep several days in a very cold refrigerator. You can always have extra pastry in the refrigerator to bake with a quickly made pie filling. Fruit cake is better if made several weeks or even months ahead and it is always a welcome treat. Other kinds of cakes keep fresh several days, while such delights as Brownies and Molasses Cookies or Hermits really improve by standing for some time in a well-covered stone crock.

Space will not permit me to give you detailed plans for such a Christmas, but I suggest that you send for the McCall party books, "What to Serve at Parties," and "Parties All the Year." They will take care of all emergencies.

To get the booklets, "What to Serve at Parties" and "Parties All the Year" send ten cents for each and address: The Service Editor, McCall's Magazine, 236 West 37th Street, New York City.

TEA-WAGON SUPPERS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

[*Continued from page 34*]

Cold Meat
Potato Salad with Green Pepper and Young Onions
Hot Biscuits or Muffins
Individual Fruit Jelly or Individual Pies

Fruit Cocktail
Fish in Individual Casseroles
Celery *Olives*
Chicken in Casserole
Potato Soufflé with Cheese
Rolls

Jellied Chicken
Creamed Potatoes
Lettuce, or Tomato Jelly Salad
Individual Ices
Small Cakes *Salted Nuts*
Coffee

Many of these dishes may be prepared the preceding day. One of the great attractions of the tea-wagon supper is that the hostess may appear fresh and ready for the fun and jollity that accompanies such an informal meal.

Nothing "messy" should be served. Jelly is taboo, as it may drip. Gravy is out of the question, cocoa is difficult.

Cider, grape juice, carbonated water, ginger ale, any iced drinks may be served, in hot weather.

If the service is to be without maid or butler, passed by members of the family or guests, nothing should be difficult to handle. Hot dishes must have handles; pitchers should have good pouring-mouths; casseroles should be wide, rather than deep so they will be easy to self-serve. Individual dishes are good, and may be kept hot or cold, as required.

There should usually be at least three kinds of sandwiches, unless other bread is served; a hearty one of meat, egg, nut, or cheese for the men; a salad sandwich of lettuce, olives, chives, onion, minced celery, green pepper, or thinly sliced vegetable, with mayonnaise; and a sweet sandwich as marmalade, jam, maple sugar, date or fig. Cream cheese, peanut butter, chopped pickles, all add variety.

Hot crackers or toasted bread, with cheese and a dash of paprika will take well with the men or the children; as will chicken and bacon grilled under the broiler!

The fruit salads you can serve are numberless. Apple, nut and celery; oranges and raisins; grape-fruit and sweet, red pepper or alligator pear are suggestions. Salads are one of the approved dishes for the tea-wagon supper since they are simple to prepare, good to look at and always liked.

The electric equipment of today makes possible the grill, percolator, and waffle-iron on the tea-wagon at the same time. A special wire just for the purpose may be attached to the side of the wagon. Bacon is grilled; delicious, crispy waffles cooked and coffee brewed in short order! Or one may fry oysters and bake muffins or even grill a shortcake on the magic waffle-iron which, covered with crushed, sugared and chilled berries, can be served just with coffee.

Whatever is planned, nothing must appear hurried or careless. Batters, syrups, and sauces should be in pitchers; silver and glass all at hand; casseroles or oven-dishes brought in at the last minute.

A tea-wagon supper usually means a "lap" supper. Therefore have large linen napkins, by all means! Nothing is more disagreeable than sticky hands so finger-bowls will be needed when sandwiches, fruit or iced cake are served. A small tray on the lower shelf of the tea-wagon may hold these.

The evening which starts off with a tea-wagon supper is sure to be a success, whatever is to follow, whether cards, dancing, music, radio or conversation.

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